UNITED NATIONS

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General Assembly
Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/50/202/Add.3
E/1995/76/Add.3
26 June 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fiftieth session
Item 99 (a) of the preliminary list*
OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT: TRIENNIAL POLICY REVIEW OF OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
Substantive session of 1995
Item 4 of the provisional agenda**
OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Summary of actions taken by the executive boards of United Nations development funds and programmes and United Nations bodies in the implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 1994/33

Note by the Secretariat

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* A/50/50/Rev.1.

** E/1995/100.

95-19132 (E) 290695 030795

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1994/33 of 27 July 1994, in paragraph 5 of which the Secretary-General was requested to include in his annual report for the operational activities segment:

(a) A section summarizing the relevant recommendations of the executive boards of the United Nations development funds and programmes;

(b) A section summarizing the relevant recommendations of the subsidiary bodies of the Council;

(c) A section summarizing the relevant recommendations of the previous operational activities segment of the Council;

(d) A section summarizing the relevant policies formulated by the General Assembly;

(e) A short analytical overview of reports on the work of the funds and programmes, highlighting common themes, trends and problems;

(f) A section on the implementation of the provisions of the triennial policy review of operational activities.

2. In considering this item, the Economic and Social Council may wish to take into account the following observations. The reference to the annual report in the above-cited resolution was probably intended for the so-called "off-years", that is, the two years between the triennial comprehensive policy reviews. Since the General Assembly at its fiftieth session will undertake a full review of the operational activities for development within the United Nations system, on the basis of a report of the Secretary-General, summaries under items (d) and (f) of paragraph 5 were not included in the present report.

3. Moreover, in order to exercise its role in providing policy guidance in operational activities, the Council may wish in the future to request the executive boards of the funds and programmes to address the relevant issues arising from the triennial comprehensive policy reviews on the basis of a common report prepared by the concerned organizations (see para. 17 below).

II. SUMMARY OF APPLICABLE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE RELEVANT EXECUTIVE BOARDS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

A. Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund

4. During the period under review (October 1994-May 1995), the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) held three regular sessions: 6 to 10 October 1994,

10 to 13 January 1995; and 3 to 7 April 1995. The Board held its annual session from 5 to 16 June 1995; the outcome will be reported directly to the Economic and Social Council in document DP/1995/L.6/Add.1-8).

5. The reports on the deliberations of the Executive Board, including the decisions adopted, are contained in documents DP/1995/1, DP/1995/2, DP/1995/9 and DP/1995/16.

1. United Nations Development Programme

6. At its third regular session in 1994, the Executive Board, inter alia, noted with concern the decreased level of contributions to UNDP and invited Governments to consider increasing their voluntary contributions to UNDP on a more predictable, continuous and assured basis. The Board also approved the proposed revised budget estimates for the biennium 1994-1995.

7. At its first two regular sessions in 1995, the Board, inter alia, approved the financial regulations governing the operations of the Office for Project Services (OPS) and endorsed the recommendation of the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Director of OPS on the role and functions of the Management Coordination Committee and the Users Advisory Group.

8. The Board endorsed the proposal of the Secretary-General to accept the offer of the Government of Germany to relocate the headquarters of the United Nations Volunteers to Bonn from mid-1996 onwards.

9. The Board supported the Administrator's initiatives to promote measures taken by UNDP in support of the implementation of the International Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and to ensure the active support of the Office to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNSO) to the Convention and its regional annexes.

10. With regard to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Board expressed concern about the serious financial and administrative situation in the Fund, and requested the Administrator to present a detailed analysis of the reasons for, the scope of, and the implications for UNIFEM and UNDP of the financial and administrative situation in the Fund.

11. In the context of its review of the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the Board requested the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Director of UNFPA to develop a strategy for the inclusion of HIV/AIDS components in their programmes and regular activities.

12. With regard to matters relating to the least developed countries, the Board requested the Administrator to assist in providing the necessary support to the preparations for the mid-term review in 1995 of the Programme of Action for the least developed countries in the 1990s and in mobilizing funding for the participation of the least developed countries.

13. At its second regular session in 1995, the Board introduced a new feature: the consideration of items in a joint UNDP/UNFPA segment. The joint segment included the consideration of UNDP and UNFPA country programmes for Indonesia and Turkey, as well as new guidelines for UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board field visits.

2. United Nations Population Fund

14. At its third regular session, in October 1994, the Executive Board, inter alia, took note of the UNFPA financial review of 1993, as contained in document DP/1994/53 (decision 94/33). The Board also requested the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Director of UNFPA to cooperate with other United Nations funds and programmes to work towards harmonizing their presentation of budgets and accounts with a view to achieving common definitions, particularly of administrative costs, and obtaining a higher degree of financial transparency and comparability and to report thereon to the Board at its third regular session in 1995 (decision 94/30).

15. At its first regular session in 1995, the Board took note of the interim report of the Executive Director on the programme priorities and future directions of UNFPA in the light of the International Conference on Population and Development, as contained in document DP/1995/8 (decision 95/7). In a decision concerning the functioning of the Executive Board secretariat, the Board requested the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Director of UNFPA to further enhance the collaboration between their organizations in the secretariat of the Board and to consider appointing a staff member of UNFPA to the Executive Board secretariat at an appropriate level (decision 95/5). The Board further requested the Administrator and Executive Director to consider ways of strengthening their cooperation in matters relating to the functioning of the Executive Board.

16. At its second regular session in 1995, the Board requested the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Director of UNFPA to develop a strategy for the inclusion of HIV/AIDS components in their programmes and regular activities within the framework of the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

17. In a draft decision on follow-up to General Assembly resolution 47/199, the Board requested UNDP and UNFPA to ensure that future reports on the implementation of the triennial policy review address more thoroughly problems and difficulties that have been identified, particularly at the field level, and contain any appropriate recommendations and requests for guidance from the Board. It further requested them, together with the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), to consider producing a common report on the implementation of the triennial policy review for both the UNDP/UNFPA and the UNICEF Executive Boards, which should contain both a common section and individual sections.

B. Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund

18. During the same period (October 1994 to May 1995), the Executive Board of UNICEF held three regular sessions: 3 to 5 October 1994; 1 to 6 February 1995; and 20 to 23 March 1995. The Board held its annual session from 22 to 26 May 1995. The reports on the deliberations of the Executive Board, including the decisions adopted, are contained in documents E/1994/34/Rev.1 and E/1995/33 (Parts I, II and III).

19. At its first regular session in 1994, the Executive Board of UNICEF adopted decision 1994/R.1/1 on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 48/162 on further measures for restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, including future working methods of the Executive Board. In this context, it took decisions, inter alia, on the committee structure and the role and composition of the Bureau. In particular, it recommended that the annual report of the Board to the Economic and Social Council should include issues, as identified in General Assembly resolution 48/162, annex II, paragraph 2, and as decided by the Board. The "common structure" section envisaged in General Assembly resolution 48/162, paragraph 29, would also be incorporated in that report.

20. At its second regular session in 1994, by its decision 1994/R.2/8 on the country programme consideration and approval process, the Board decided to discuss how to improve its working methods. In its decision 1995/8, the Board, in deciding on this issue, inter alia, called upon the UNICEF country representative, in consultation with the recipient country and the United Nations resident coordinator, to take the necessary steps to organize, at an early stage, periodic meetings to exchange views with relevant partners on the status of UNICEF country programmes to avoid duplication and strengthen mutual support. The Board also requested the secretariat to submit to the Board a summary of the outcome of mid-term reviews and major evaluation reports, specifying, inter alia, the results achieved, lessons learned and the need for any adjustment in the country note. The Board would comment on those reports and provide guidance to the secretariat if necessary. The Board decided that those arrangements would take effect in 1996.

21. In its decision 1994/R.2/13, the Board encouraged the UNICEF secretariat to continue to participate actively in the ongoing negotiations among the secretariats of UNICEF, UNDP, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNFPA, the World Health Organization and the World Bank to establish with urgency a United Nations joint and co-sponsored programme on HIV/AIDS to ensure that a proposal is put before the Economic and Social Council. The Board decided to transmit its decision to the Economic and Social Council and to the secretariats of the other co-sponsoring organizations. In its decision 1995/13 on coordination of UNICEF activities concerning HIV/AIDS, the Board requested the UNICEF secretariat to develop a strategy for the inclusion of HIV/AIDS components in its programmes and regular activities within the framework of the joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS.

22. In its decision 1995/5, the Board decided on the format and content of annual reports to the Economic and Social Council. The report, inter alia,

would contain a section outlining measures taken in the implementation of the provisions of the triennial policy review of operational activities and a section on the activities and measures undertaken within the designated theme(s) for the high-level meeting of the operational activities segment. The Board also decided that, at its annual session, those sections would be considered as distinct agenda items and the comments and recommendations relating to those sections would be submitted to the Economic and Social Council as a clearly identifiable part of the report on the annual session of the Board.

23. At its third regular session in 1994, the Executive Board, inter alia, requested the Executive Director, in the context of General Assembly decision 47/449 of 22 December 1992, to cooperate with other United Nations programmes and funds to work towards the harmonization of their presentation of budgets and accounts, in particular in relation to administrative costs, with a view to achieving common definitions thereof and obtaining a higher degree of financial transparency and comparability and to report back to the Executive Board at its third regular session in 1995.

24. At its first regular session in 1995, the Executive Board, inter alia, confirmed the format and content of the annual reports of the Executive Board to the Economic and Social Council approved at its second regular session in 1994. At its first and second regular sessions in 1995, the Executive Board, inter alia, approved an internal process of management reform in UNICEF.

25. At its second regular session, the Board also approved the proposals for UNICEF cooperation and programme reviews. Work was continued on this subject at the 1995 annual session of the Board. At its 1995 annual session, the Board also approved a new format for future decisions of the Executive Board.

III. SUMMARY OF RELEVANT RECOMMENDATIONS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

A. Statistical Commission

26. The Statistical Commission, in paragraph 87 (a) of its report (E/1995/28), expressed serious concern about the diminished resources available to the United Nations for providing technical support in statistics and informatics. In paragraph 87 (c), the Commission requested the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat to submit an analytical report to the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on the overall analysis of the funding situation, covering both multilateral and bilateral cooperation; an examination of the priorities of the donor agencies, an analysis of how the allocations on different projects were made, changes over time in this pattern, and how the Commission could make its wishes known to the donor agencies; and an analysis of the impact of the new agency support-cost arrangements at the country level.

B. Commission for Social Development

27. The Commission for Social Development, inter alia, recognized that it should be considered by the Economic and Social Council as the body with a central role in the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development. The Commission called for a review by the Council of its mandate, agenda and composition, including an expansion of its membership and the annualization of its meetings. The practice of opening its debates to experts and the main actors of civil society in the field of social development was also recommended.

28. In the annex to Commission resolution 34/1, which contained the United Nations Declaration of Intent on Youth: Problems and Potential (see E/1995/24), concerned bodies and agencies of the United Nations system were urged to explore ways and means of achieving greater coherence in data collection and the publication of statistics. This could include programme planning and coordination on an inter-agency basis (para. 96). The Declaration called for identifying opportunities for joint planning among interested members of the United Nations system so that joint action might be undertaken (para. 102). The Declaration also called for greater streamlining in technical cooperation policies and procedures, particularly for training and advisory services, so that they did not place undue administrative burdens on national officials. With national execution as the principal mode for technical cooperation, offices responsible for national youth policies and programmes should be in a position to plan and execute technical cooperation activities available from all sources. The aim should be to reduce administrative overheads, as these proportionately reduce the resources available for technical cooperation (para. 105).

C. Commission on Population and Development

29. The Commission on Population and Development will submit a separate report on population and development issues arising from the International Conference on Population and Development to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1995.

D. Commission on the Status of Women

30. The Commission on the Status of Women, in paragraph 6 of chapter III of its report (E/1995/26), maintained that the United Nations should be an effective vehicle for helping women to implement the global changes outlined in the draft Platform for Action. Efforts should be made to trim the bureaucracy and reduce overhead costs, and to dedicate more resources to programmes, particularly for women's empowerment. To that end, steps should be taken to ensure that the United Nations programmes with portfolios specific to women were not duplicated.

E. Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development

31. The Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development recommended that energy activities within the United Nations system

should be strengthened and coordinated to accelerate rural energy development (E/1995/25, chap. II, para. 88). The Committee noted with great concern that in the field of energy, there was no practical coordination mechanism within the United Nations system at either the planning or the implementation stage. In that context, the Committee recommended, inter alia, that the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the United Nations Secretariat and UNDP be strengthened to improve the coordination of energy activities within the United Nations system at the planning and implementation stage. It noted, in that context, the need for an in-depth study on the ways and means of strengthening institutional arrangements within the United Nations system.

32. The Committee recommended that, before the year 2000, a global initiative should be launched by UNDP, the World Bank, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other interested organizations, with the support of donor countries, in order to facilitate the efforts of the developing countries to develop and implement a massive effort to bring electric power to the people in rural and isolated areas (E/1995/25, chap. II, para. 1 (c)). The Committee also recommended that, before the year 2000, a global initiative should be launched by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other interested organizations, with the support of donor countries, to set up a combined programme to achieve detailed mapping of the potential of renewable energy sources (chap. II, para. 1 (d)).

F. Commission on Science and Technology for Development

33. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development requested the relevant United Nations bodies and donor organizations to assist interested countries to formulate policies and action plans to implement, evaluate and improve efforts for targeted research and development and the application of science and technology in helping to satisfy basic needs and to report on progress in this area at its next session (see E/1995/31). The Commission invited FAO, UNEP, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), in cooperation with the regional commissions, to work together with a view to designing programmes to address specific land management problems. It was recommended that the Commission liaise with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in establishing a programme of country reviews on science, technology and innovation policy for interested countries. UNDP was requested to explore funding those activities from centrally controlled resources. It was recommended that the Commission, in its substantive work, maximize coordination in undertaking its inter-sessional studies on specific issues by relating actively to competent United Nations organs and agencies, as well as other multilateral organizations. In its decision 2/101, the Commission decided to avoid duplication of work being carried out in related fields by international organizations. In reviewing the science and technology-related activities reported by the agencies of the United Nations system, the Commission noted that the possibilities for overlapping mandates and programmes could not be excluded, although agencies approached those issues from different sectoral perspectives. The purpose of coordination should be to promote the complementarity of various

activities while avoiding duplication as much as possible. Clear criteria for coordination needed to be identified. The Commission recommended that the feasibility of establishing a joint working group with the Commission on Sustainable Development could be further discussed between the two bureaux (see E/1995/31, chap. IV).

G. Commission on Sustainable Development

34. The Commission on Sustainable Development noted the importance of developing, among the organizations of the United Nations system, a common or compatible system of access to their respective databases, in order to share data fully, to streamline the collection and interpretation of data and to identify data gaps, for the purpose of providing more comprehensive and integrated data to decision makers. The Commission invited the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development to refine measures for establishing such an approach and to report to the Commission at its fourth session. The Commission noted the rapidly growing number of information systems for sustainable development and invited the Secretary-General to consider ways of enhancing compatibility among and access to these systems and to report his findings to it at its fourth session.

35. The Commission expressed appreciation to the Statistical Commission for its offer to collaborate with and support the Commission in its work on indicators of sustainable development. The Commission recommended that the Economic and Social Council, when considering a common framework for the implementation of the outcome of United Nation conferences in the economic and social fields, examine how to ensure synergy and cooperation between the Commission on Sustainable Development and other functional commissions with responsibilities in the area of poverty eradication, including consideration about the proper division of labour among them. In that context, the Commission also recommended to the Economic and Social Council to examine how to ensure synergy between the Commission and the Commission on Population and Development.

36. The Commission recommended improved cooperation and coordination among national institutions in recipient and donor countries, international organizations (including financial institutions) and the private sector and non-governmental organizations, inter alia, through the elaboration of national sustainable development strategies and plans, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of official development assistance (ODA) delivery and use. The Commission requested the Secretary-General to strengthen coordination and cooperation among the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system by developing and implementing joint approaches and collaborative programmes. The Commission urged national Governments to develop comprehensive, integrated and multidisciplinary action plans and strategies in a number of areas such as management of forests, mountain development, combating desertification and management of drought, linkage between land and water management, integrated land management and bio-diversity and sustainable utilization of its components. In the context of the programme of work of sustainable development of all types of forests, it was urged that ways and means be explored to improve the efficiency and coordination of bilateral and multilateral assistance.

H. Regional commissions

37. The work of the regional commissions will also be considered by the Council at its substantive session of 1995 under item 7.

1. Economic Commission for Africa

38. In resolution 807 (XXX) on programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1996-1997, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) requested the Secretary-General to ensure, through the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), that United Nations programmes and activities for the Africa region are coordinated and harmonized for cost-effectiveness, synergy and greater impact. In paragraph 18 of the special memorandum on the mid-term global review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the least developed countries in the 1990s, the Commission recommended that the Round-table and Consultative Group meetings be further strengthened as an appropriate mechanism for aid mobilization and coordination. It expressed great concern that a fewer number of African least developed countries organized round-table and consultative group meetings during 1990-1994 as compared with the 1980s. It recommended that the lead agencies, UNDP and the World Bank, ensure that the country review process leads to translating the principles and commitments of the Programme of Action into concrete measures at the national level. In paragraph 20, it expressed concern that the commitments on international support measures had not been fully implemented. In paragraph 31, it elaborated on that subject and stated that, instead of donors improving their performance, there had been a movement away from target implementation, followed by lower aid contributions in general. In addition to recommending the need for donors to fulfil the commitments and targets established in the Programme of Action, particularly the 0.20 per cent of their gross national product in the form of ODA resource flows, there was also a need to improve the quality and terms of ODA by increasing the grant and near grant elements, while minimizing the tying of aid. In paragraph 37, the Commission recommended, in view of General Assembly resolution 32/197 on the Commission's responsibility for the coordination of overall development activities in the Africa region, that the World Bank and UNDP associate ECA in the organizational process of round-table and consultative group meetings.

2. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

39. In resolution 51/4 on the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP Region, the Executive Secretary was requested to promote an integrated, intersectoral approach, and ensure effective coordination of the activities of all concerned United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations and private voluntary and community-based organizations, in facilitating and monitoring the implementation of the Agenda for Action. In resolution 51/7 on the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration and Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific, the Executive Secretary was requested to establish an inter-agency task force to promote intersectoral participation and ensure coordination of the activities of all concerned United Nations bodies and specialized agencies.

3. Economic Commission for Europe

40. In resolution B (50), the Commission recommended that the Secretary-General consider using the Commission as a focal point to facilitate the promotion and enhancing of mutual cooperation with United Nations global programmes, organs and specialized agencies in the transition to a market economy and the integration with the European and global economy.

IV. ANALYTICAL OVERVIEW OF REPORTS ON THE WORK OF THE FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES, HIGHLIGHTING COMMON THEMES, TRENDS AND PROBLEMS

41. The following sections are drawn from reports submitted by the secretariats of the organizations concerned to their executive boards and reflect the views of those secretariats.

A. United Nations Population Fund

42. A primary focus of the work of UNFPA during the past several years has been to enhance the impact and effectiveness of UNFPA assistance at the country level. The Fund has sought to do so by, inter alia, sharpening the focus of UNFPA assistance; further decentralizing decision-making and programme-approval authority to its country offices; improving the monitoring and evaluation of population activities; enhancing the substantive, managerial and operational skills of its staff; improving the Fund's information systems, in particular those for financial and programme management; enhancing the accountability and transparency of UNFPA-supported programmes; and bringing high-quality technical assistance closer to the country level.

43. UNFPA has also worked to improve coordination and collaboration with its development partners in the United Nations system, as well as to forge new partnerships, particularly with the non-governmental and private sectors; to harmonize programme cycles with partner organizations in the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) and to adapt them to government planning cycles; to participate in the resident coordinator system, notably in country strategy note exercises; and to strengthen national execution and national capacity-building.

1. Strengthening the focus of assistance

44. The programme priorities and future directions of UNFPA in the light of the International Conference on Population and Development, as set out in document DP/1995/25, was considered by the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board at its annual session in June 1995. As indicated in that document, UNFPA proposed to concentrate its funding in three core areas: (a) reproductive health and family planning; (b) population policy; and (c) advocacy. The selection of these three areas will enable UNFPA to sharpen the strategic focus of its programming and capitalize on its comparative advantage and experience in the field of population and development. It will also enable the Fund to pursue a holistic

approach in addressing the specific population needs of individual countries, and facilitate efforts to improve coordination among the many agencies and organizations active in population and development activities.

2. Decentralizing decision-making

45. In 1993, UNFPA raised the delegated project-approval authority to country offices to $750,000, up from $500,000 from 1990 to 1993 and $250,000 before 1990. In addition, the Fund extended total programme approval, on a trial basis, to 12 countries or areas (Algeria, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Honduras, Malawi, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, Senegal, the South Pacific subregion and the Syrian Arab Republic). As a result, 80 per cent of UNFPA country projects were approved by decentralized approval authority in 1994, as compared to 45 per cent in 1993.

3. Enhancing the skills of UNFPA staff

46. UNFPA training activities in 1994 focused on enhancing the capacity of country offices to improve the quality, effectiveness and outreach of UNFPA-supported programmes. The Fund's Field Staff Training Workshop for National Programme Officers and Country Directors, for example, provided participants with an overview of the operational activities of the Fund, increased their knowledge and skills in applying UNFPA policies and procedures, and developed their skills in programme formulation, management and evaluation. Participants examined the Fund's Programme Review and Strategy Development process and its linkages with well-defined and realistic objectives and with built-in monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

47. The Fund also held several in-house workshops for members of UNFPA country support teams (CST) to enhance their technical skills; organized a workshop for 14 senior officers from headquarters and the field to improve their management skills; and organized two regional training courses for field staff to improve financial accountability and to facilitate accurate and transparent reporting of expenditures.

4. Improving information systems

48. UNFPA continued to improve the availability and use of information technology throughout the organization. This included major efforts to enhance the capabilities of the Programme Resources Management System and to upgrade the UNFPA Integrated Field Office System. The ongoing improvement of these systems, along with rigorous staff training in their proper application, further strengthened the financial monitoring capacity of UNFPA and continued to increase administrative efficiency. Office automation reached a new level at both headquarters and in the field, as the Fund expanded and improved the capacity of its local area network (LAN) and of its electronic mail system. UNFPA also introduced Internet services into its headquarters system.

5. Enhancing accountability and transparency

49. The UNDP Governing Council, in its decision 91/36, recognized the need to strengthen the internal audit functions of UNFPA by creating a UNFPA Internal Audit Section within the UNDP Division for Audit and Management Review. This was considered a first step towards the establishment of the Fund's own internal audit capability. The UNFPA Internal Audit Section became operational in May 1993 with the assignment of a full-time Professional staff member to the Section. A second Professional staff member joined the Section in September 1994.

50. UNFPA entered into an agreement with UNDP for the use of the UNDP Regional Service Centres in Kuala Lumpur for the Asia and Pacific region (in 1993) and in Harare for the Africa region (in 1994). Under these agreements, commercial audit firms are contracted to provide annual audit coverage of UNFPA country offices in these regions. As a result of these initiatives, audit coverage of UNFPA country offices increased from five offices in 1992 to 21 in 1993. In 1994, 16 offices were audited, and the 1995 audit work plan of the Division foresees visits to 54 UNFPA country offices.

6. Providing high-quality technical assistance

51. The principal UNFPA mechanism for providing technical support services (TSS) is the country support team, of which there are currently eight in operation. The work of the teams is complemented by specialists and coordinators located at the United Nations and its regional commissions, at the headquarters of United Nations specialized agencies and at WHO regional offices. An independent evaluation of the Fund's TSS/CST system concluded that the system, specifically the CST system of advisers, was a major improvement over the previous system of regional advisers and that this approach had been welcomed by all concerned. The CSTs had been most effective in providing backstopping support for UNFPA-funded projects, particularly in building a multidisciplinary approach to country programming. The evaluation also found some shortcomings in the operationalization of the overall system to date, particularly with respect to the role of the TSS specialists at the headquarters level and the linkages between the CSTs and the TSS specialists.

7. Strengthening national execution

52. The Fund's policy guidelines require UNFPA staff to assess the availability of national expertise before including a component on external technical assistance in a project. During 1994, UNFPA field offices continued to work closely with national authorities in identifying national expertise as well as in assessing capacities of government institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to be used in the implementation of population activities. UNFPA country support teams and country directors continued to build up rosters of national experts for use as consultants and participants in technical missions and training workshops.

8. Harmonizing programming cycles and procedures

53. UNFPA participated in the JCGP subgroup that examined ways to harmonize and simplify programme and project policies and procedures. The subgroup decided to build up, systematically, a common approach to specific issues that the JCGP organizations have in common. By the end of 1994, the programme cycles of UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA had been fully synchronized in 35 countries, and some 50 others are to be harmonized during the next programming cycle (1996-2001). However, the social and political conditions in some 20 countries make the undertaking of the harmonization exercise very difficult.

9. Income and expenditures

54. UNFPA income in 1994 was $265.3 million, an increase of 20.8 per cent over the 1993 income of $219.6 million. Total expenditures for projects, from regular resources, increased from $134.3 million in 1993 to $201.4 million in 1994, an increase of $67.1 million, or 50 per cent. These increases reversed the trend of the previous year, which had seen a decline in income (7.8 per cent less than that in 1992) and an increase in unspent resources at year-end. The underexpenditure in 1993 was attributable primarily to the uncertainty surrounding the Fund's financial situation, in particular the possibly reduced funding levels from Governments experiencing economic difficulties, which had resulted in conservative resource planning and programme development. It was also the result of the suspension of activities supported by UNFPA in a number of countries experiencing civil and political unrest.

B. United Nations Development Programme

Summary of the 1995 annual report of the Administrator

(a) Introduction

55. The Executive Board, in its decision 94/14, essentially redefined the Programme's mission and mandate "to assist programme countries in their endeavour to realize sustainable human development, in line with their national development programmes and priorities". The new mission was expressed through three goals - including the promotion of international cooperation for sustainable human development and enabling the United Nations system to become a powerful force for sustainable human development - and four priority areas, i.e., poverty elimination, creation of employment and sustainable livelihoods, advancement of women, and protection and regeneration of the environment.

(b) International and national cooperation for sustainable human development

56. At the intellectual level, UNDP contributed to the ongoing international debate on development through its annual Human Development Report series. In this light, the 1994 Report was particularly useful in the lead-up to the World Summit for Social Development, while the 1995 Report focuses on gender issues and on valuing women's work as input to the deliberations of the Fourth World Conference on Women, in September 1995.

57. Similarly, national human development reports have been developed in practically all regions of UNDP operations and are proving useful as entry points for introducing the sustainable human development paradigm into the national development dialogue. Other innovative initiatives launched within the past two years include the National Long-term Perspective Studies programme introduced in several African countries to help define national priorities over a 25-year "futures" horizon.

58. UNDP has also worked extensively with other sister agencies to provide support to the Secretary-General and member countries in their preparations for the International Conference on Population and Development and the World Summit for Social Development. Using its network of country offices, UNDP has assisted many programme countries in the preparation of their positions at these global forums.

(c) Enabling the United Nations system to become a powerful force for sustainable human development

59. In July 1994, the Secretary-General entrusted the Administrator with overall responsibility for assisting him in improving the coordination of operational activities for development, including the strengthening of the resident coordinator system. To support him in this task, the Administrator created an Office for United Nations System Support and established a $2 million facility to support resident coordinator functions at the country level.

60. The pool for resident coordinators has been broadened to include candidates from the Joint Consultative Group on Policy and other United Nations agencies.

61. To further inter-agency coordination, UNDP established an Inter-Agency Coordination and External Policy Office within a restructured Bureau of Resources and External Affairs. The Office provides a single focal point in UNDP for formal relations with United Nations and other external partners such as the Development Assistance Committee (DAC).

62. Considerable progress has also been achieved in streamlining the respective roles among the United Nations agencies. UNDP reached an agreement with the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat for the resident coordinator to progressively assume the overall functions of the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) Director, ensuring further integration of the United Nations system at the country level. A statement of principles was signed with the United Nations Environment Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, outlining respective roles and an intention to collaborate as much as possible. A task force between UNDP and the World Bank has been revitalized to develop a revised statement of principles for collaboration. With the World Bank and the secretariat of the Development Assistance Committee, UNDP also organized a high-level seminar in Paris in June 1994 on the subject of technical cooperation. As a new permanent observer to DAC, UNDP is an active participant in the network formed to follow up the seminar's recommendations.

(d) Poverty elimination

63. In preparation for the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, UNDP prepared a strategy paper on designing and implementing national programmes for poverty eradication. In recognition of the importance of rural agriculture in the alleviation of poverty, employment creation, the preservation of the environment and mainstreaming women in economic development, broad guidelines, entitled "Sustainable Human Development and Agriculture", have been produced and now serve as basic reference for programming in UNDP. Employment generation is of central importance to poverty elimination, and UNDP has sought extensive collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO) in this area.

(e) Advancement of women

64. In the course of 1994, UNDP supported various initiatives to contribute to the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women. Support was provided at the national level through the resident coordinator system and at regional levels and included the preparation of national reports for the Conference and the facilitation of dialogue on the status of women between government, United Nations and civil society organizations.

65. UNDP also strongly supports the integration of gender policy issues into governance and poverty elimination, women in crisis situations, environment, legislative frameworks and statistics and data analysis. Internally, the Programme's own commitment to organizational gender equity was underscored by senior management's endorsement of specific targets to attain greater gender balance for senior management and to improve the career prospects of General Service staff, who are predominantly female.

(f) Protection and generation of the environment

66. In the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, UNDP has focused on supporting countries to build capacities to supplement Agenda 21, on phasing out ozone-depleting substances in support of the Montreal Protocol, on land management and desertification control activities, on a global forestry initiative and on defining a UNDP approach to alternative and sustainable forms of energy as one of the most critical factors in the management of the environment. As of March 1995, UNDP was assisting 31 countries in their efforts to phase out ozone-depleting substances under the Montreal Protocol on protection of the global ozone layer.

67. To meet the growing demand for national capacity to manage complex environmental concerns, a new UNDP Division of Sustainable Energy and Environment was established in August 1994. Also, a new Initiative for Sustainable Energy is being formulated to support programme formulation and to provide for greater access to improved energy technology.

(g) Governance

68. A major UNDP study of capacity development was completed in 1994, with the principal finding that the major obstacles to capacity development in many

countries lie not in the area of institution-building but in the effective utilization and retention of the capacity that exists. The conclusion of this analysis underscores the crucial role of sound governance in creating and enabling environments in which the capacity of individuals and institutions can find their expression.

69. A major step towards enhanced governance is the holding of free, fair and predictable elections. Collaborating closely with the Electoral Assistance Division of the United Nations Secretariat, UNDP has responded to an increasing number of country requests relating to the introduction or enhancement of the electoral processes in a number of African and Latin American countries.

70. The HIV/AIDS pandemic represents a major development challenge for the international community. UNDP is one of the six co-sponsoring organizations of the new Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, scheduled to take full effect on 1 January 1996. Among the Programme's principal focuses are ethics, law and human rights as they pertain to HIV, with networks established in the Africa, Asia and Pacific and Latin America and Caribbean regions.

71. In recent years, there has also been a proliferation of civil strife in various countries, with enormous attendant human and financial costs. UNDP has sought to work closely with international humanitarian agencies not only to mobilize resources and facilitate the delivery of relief but also to prepare post-crisis development strategies. A case in point is Somalia where, in spite of the flux in the security situation, UNDP managed to continue an active rural rehabilitation programme in some parts of the country in anticipation of the return to normalcy.

72. In terms of the programme, the year 1994 represented the mid-point of the current fifth indicative planning figure (IPF) cycle (1992-1996). Mid-term reviews completed indicate that the majority of fifth cycle country and inter-country programmes are essentially strategic in orientation and much better focused in fewer concentration areas than in previous cycles. The programmes have tended to use the modality of national execution as a deliberate strategy to enhance the local ownership of programmes and build local capacities in the process. However, programmes remain weak in the area of measurability of impact - the setting of variable targets, performance indicators and benchmarks. In 1994, UNDP established the Office of Evaluation and Strategic Planning, in part to strengthen this function in programme development.

73. It became clear in 1994 that, owing to the stagnation in its core resources, the next UNDP biennial budget (1996/1997) would have to be reduced by as much as $55 million to keep administrative costs in line with core programme resources.

(h) Conclusion

74. In early 1994, the Executive Board began a series of deliberations and consultations on the direction UNDP would take after the conclusion of the current cycle, with a view to arriving at a decision by June 1995. The debate takes into account the global compacts adopted by the community of nations, the

mandate for focus on sustainable human development, the need to differentiate among countries according to their varied conditions, the requirement to support the resident coordinator system and an uncertain resource outlook.

75. The work of UNDP in 1994-1995 underscores the fact that the understanding of development has undergone a paradigm shift. The United Nations, in part through its series of global conferences, has been a major actor in this evolution. UNDP has made a significant contribution to this process through its emphasis on the people-centred nature of development and the importance of sustainability - both ecologically and institutionally.

C. United Nations Children's Fund

76. The Fund's leadership changed in 1995, with Carol Bellamy appointed as the fourth Executive Director, succeeding James P. Grant who had led the organization for 15 years until his death in January 1995. This change of leadership comes at an important time for the organization. The year 1995 is the mid-point of the decade-long strategy of the World Summit for Children to meet global objectives for the welfare of children. During 1995-1996, UNICEF, in partnership with Governments, non-governmental organizations and sister United Nations agencies, will take stock of global progress towards meeting the mid-decade goals so that, collectively, an evaluation of the work done over the past five years can be made, as well as an assessment as to whether countries and UNICEF are on the right trajectory to meet the objectives for the year 2000. The International Conference on Population and Development and the World Summit for Social Development have reiterated the commitment of the international community to these goals.

77. The top priority of UNICEF through the end of 1995 is to help as many countries as possible to achieve the goals for child survival, development and protection set at the World Summit for Children in September 1990. In 1994, UNICEF supported programmes in 149 countries - 46 in Africa, 37 in Latin America and the Caribbean (including 10 Caribbean island countries), 34 in Asia (including 13 Pacific island countries), 14 in the Middle East and North Africa and 18 in central and eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States. The total programme expenditure reached $801 million.

78. UNICEF continued to address the main causes of child mortality with a focus on prevention, including immunization, as well as the prevention and treatment of the major killers - acute respiratory infections, diarrhoeal diseases and malaria in areas of high endemicity.

79. The HIV/AIDS pandemic continued to spread, with rates rising among poor women and youth. UNICEF further developed and applied its strategies for addressing the pandemic in the context of addressing the overall health-related issues affecting youth and women. The consensus agreed to at the International Conference on Population and Development and the UNICEF policy on family planning approved by the Executive Board in 1993 served as the guidelines for developing programme approaches to women's health. The Bamako Initiative, as a strategy for strengthening local primary health care systems, expanded to 33 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

80. Further progress was made in several countries in combining household food security, health measures and child care to formulate a nutrition strategy. Global and country-level activities continued to achieve the mid-decade goals of universal iodization of salt and vitamin A distribution to all vulnerable people. Progress under the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative indicated that the mid-decade target of at least 1,000 "baby-friendly" hospitals would be surpassed.

81. Most countries in East Asia, Latin America and the Middle East achieved the goal of universal access to primary education, surpassing mid-decade school enrolment targets. However, more than one half of the developing countries, including high-population countries in South Asia and Africa, still have to make major strides before all their children can be provided adequate opportunities for basic education. Girls' primary education was the dominant component of UNICEF support for education in South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa.

82. UNICEF assisted some 100 countries in achieving their water supply and sanitation goals and worked to refine strategies that emphasize sustainability and maximize health and socio-economic benefits. Progress was made in gaining acceptance of the women's equality and empowerment framework and the life-cycle approach as a tool for promoting gender-balanced programmes for children and development.

83. While pursuing these long-term development efforts, UNICEF was also called upon to play an active role in responding to many emergencies in which women and children were the hardest-hit victims. Nearly 27 per cent of the UNICEF programme expenditure in 1994 was devoted to providing life-saving essential services for children and women in emergencies. As in other main programme areas, UNICEF works closely in the field and at headquarters with other United Nations-system organizations, the Bretton Woods institutions and international and national non-governmental organizations. In emergency situations, there has been tremendous cooperation between UNICEF, the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, WHO, UNESCO, the International Committee for the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations.

84. The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been embraced by more States than any other human rights treaty in history. By June 1995, 174 States had ratified the Convention, with only 17 countries needing to attain the goal of universal ratification by the end of 1995.

85. At its forty-ninth session, the General Assembly discussed for the first time the issue of children's rights and adopted resolutions on the protection of children in armed conflicts; the need to adopt measures for the prevention and eradication of the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; implementation of the Convention; and the plight of street children (resolutions 49/209, 49/210, 49/211 and 49/212, respectively, all of 23 December 1994).

86. UNICEF continues to pay special attention to Africa and the least developed countries. Despite the continuing and threatening emergencies in certain parts of sub-Saharan Africa, there are many positive developments that go almost unnoticed. In the areas of special action for children, 25 of the 46 countries

in sub-Saharan Africa have either increased or sustained the immunization levels of 74 per cent or higher reached in 1990; the usage rate of oral rehydration therapy has now reached 50 per cent; salt iodization measures are being implemented in 28 of the 39 countries affected by iodine deficiency disorders; and guinea worm disease is well on the way to being eliminated from most of Africa.

87. Nevertheless, as more and more countries are harmonizing macroeconomic policies to meet the demands of adjustment, aid flows to Africa are declining, the debt burden has grown more onerous and per capita incomes continue to dwindle. Most worrying for children is the fact that, in many countries, primary education is stagnating or declining, leaving higher numbers and a higher proportion of children out of school. Moreover, the quality of schooling remains disastrously weak. The question of how to achieve much greater international action in support of basic education for all children in Africa continues to pose a special challenge. UNICEF continues to advocate for Africa on a global level and devotes some 38 per cent of its financial and human resources to sub-Saharan Africa. It helps build capacities and empowers communities and families.

88. A major priority for UNICEF in 1995 is to strengthen its internal management. The new Executive Director of UNICEF has indicated that improving its financial management and administrative and programme systems will constitute one of the twin pillars on which the work of UNICEF will move into the next century; the other pillar being to ensure more effective and efficient programme delivery within the context of the objectives of the World Summit for Children.

V. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE TRIENNIAL POLICY REVIEW OF OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

89. This subject is covered in the interim report (A/50/202/Add.1-E/1995/76/Add.1) of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 on operational activities.